



Department of Health and Human Services

Task Force on Hoarding Behavior



National Catholic School of Social Service / Center on Global Aging
Monday, December 12, 2011
Presentation by: John J. Kenney, Ph.D.

Montgomery County Task Force on Hoarding Behavior Formed

- ▶ The Montgomery County Task Force on Hoarding Behavior (TFHB) was formed in September 2009 as a collaborative endeavor to:
 - Share information, expertise and resources to better address the complexity of hoarding situations.
 - Develop a concerted and coordinated multi-agency intervention strategy

Montgomery County Task Force on Hoarding Behavior Members

Name	Department/Agency
Uma S. Ahluwalia	Director, DHHS
Pazit Aviv	Housing Opportunities Commission
Elsbeth N. Bell	Behavior Therapy Center of Greater Washington
Odile Brunetto	DHHS, Area Agency on Aging
Debra Christner	DHHS, Public Health Services
Marjorie Ciccone	City of Takoma Park
Raymond L. Crowel	DHHS, Behavioral Health and Crisis Services
Betsy L. Davis	Police
Scott A. Davis	Police
Lillian T. Durham	Housing Opportunities Commission
John Duggan	Affiliated Sante Group
Sybil Greenhut	DHHS, Behavioral Health & Crisis Services
Michael T. Hamilton	Fire and Rescue Services
Thomas E. Harr	Family Services, Inc.
Susan Hawfield	Rebuilding Together Montgomery County

Name	Department/Agency
Paul D. Hibler	Police – Animal Services Division
Matthew Kelleher	Fire and Rescue Services
John J. Kenney, Ph.D.	DHHS, Aging and Disability Services
Bonnie Klem	DHHS, Aging and Disability Services
Raymond Logan	City of Rockville - Police
Kevin M. Martell	Dept. Housing and Community Affairs
Dan McHugh	Dept. Housing and Community Affairs
Roger Peele, Ph.D.	DHHS, Behavioral Health and Crisis Services
James Savage	County Attorney
Diana Schofield	CYFS – Child Welfare Services
Barbara A. Soniat	Catholic University of America
Julia Thom	Dept. Housing and Community Affairs
Cara Thomas	Police – Animal Services Division
Kathy Thrower	Rebuilding Together Montgomery County
Ralph Vines	Office of Consumer Protection
Michael Walh	Police – Animal Services Division

GOALS: The near term goals established by the TFHB are as follows:

1. Provide a coordinated response to hoarding cases to ensure the health and safety of all affected residents, through the efforts of public and private agencies.
2. Facilitate the ability of participating agencies to share information, expertise and resources in order to better understand and respond to this debilitating and/or dangerous behavior.
3. Determine the extent of the hoarding problem in Montgomery County through multi-agency collaboration and consistent data collection/reporting methods.

GOALS: The near term goals established by the TFHB are as follows:

4. Establish a 4-point Hoarding Awareness/Intervention Program consisting of:
 - ▶ Awareness
 - ▶ Identification
 - ▶ Proactive Assistance/Intervention
 - ▶ Follow-up/monitoring methods
5. Develop practical tools and identify additional resource gaps.
6. Develop policies and practices to reduce and prevent the incidence of severe hoarding among our residents

Introduction

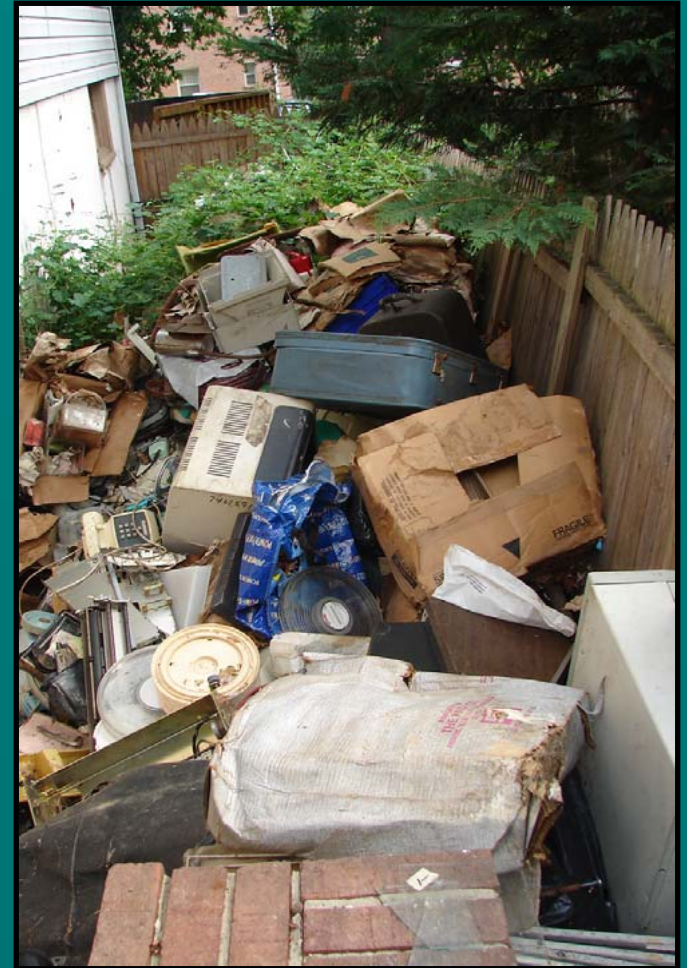
- ▶ “Hoarding is an under-recognized problem that exists in most communities and adversely impacts the health, welfare, and safety of humans, animals, and the environment. The situations are often complex and a full response is likely to be prolonged and require a cross-jurisdictional multi-agency effort.” *

*Castrodale, L., et al. “General Public Health Considerations for Responding to Animal Hoarding Cases”. Journal of Environmental Health, Vol. 72, No. 7, pg. 14-18.



Introduction

- ▶ As Montgomery County faces a dramatic growth in the aging population, a significant increase in the hoarding phenomenon is expected.
- ▶ This report by the Montgomery County Task Force on Hoarding Behavior (TFHB) presents a snapshot of Montgomery County's proactive efforts to address the complex issue of hoarding.
- ▶ Our response to this serious issue is paramount to the current and future health and safety of endangered individuals and our community at large.



Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

Purpose

- ▶ To ensure a more efficient, effective and coordinated response among public and private agencies to the prevention, investigation and remediation of serious hoarding behavior in our community.

Problem Statement

- ▶ Compulsive hoarding is a chronic, multi-systemic challenge that requires a coordinated, multi-agency, public/private response.
 - The Code Enforcement Division of the Department of Housing and Community Affairs responds to approximately 75-100 complaints involving hoarding behavior per year.
 - Police Department/Animal Services responds to 15-20 calls of animal hoarding per year. Department of Fire and Rescue responds to 35-40 cases involving hoarding behavior per year.

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

Problem Statement (continued)

- ▶ Hoarding case numbers are approximate for Adult Protective Services (APS) cases and represent 10% of the total APS cases investigated
- ▶ In FY10, hoarding cases rose to 12% of total APS cases investigated with vulnerable or self-neglected adults
- ▶ **Note:** In the past fiscal year, there has been a 19% increase in severe hoarding cases

Adult Protective Services Cases Investigated		
	Total	Involved Severe Hoarding
FY08	593	59
FY09	673	67
FY10	665	80 (12% increase)

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

Problem Statement (continued)

- ▶ Montgomery County is a large, diverse County of one million people, of which seniors comprise approximately 14% of the population
 - As the older population 65+ increases, there are increased mental health issues as well as physical and emotional concerns
 - Though not limited to older adults, the average age of a hoarder is 50
 - Since the condition has a chronic or worsening course, we can expect as our population ages, the incidence of compulsive hoarding cases will increase in number and severity

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

Problem Statement (continued)

- ▶ Additionally, though many persons with severe hoarding behavior have the private resources required for the range of interventions required to address the situation (e.g., waste removal, heavy chore services, psychotherapy), many residents who demonstrate compulsive hoarding are low-income or in financial debt (due to the compulsive purchasing of material goods) and lack the funds required.
- ▶ These individuals and the community turn to the public sector to provide whatever services are needed to address the problem.

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

Problem Statement (continued)

- ▶ Moreover, it is usually difficult to be proactive in identifying and intervening with residents with compulsive hoarding tendencies
- ▶ Intervention may occur only after the onset of a crisis, i.e. eviction from their home, a fire resulting undoubtedly from an accumulation of items such as newspapers, animal cruelty complaints, etc



November 2011-Senior dies in house fire complicated by hoarding

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

Cooperative Agreement Goals

- ▶ Ensure the safety of individual adults, children, families and communities through the coordinated efforts and shared expertise of the public and private agencies participating in this agreement.
- ▶ Enhance ability of participating agencies to share information, expertise and resources in order to better understand and respond to this potentially debilitating and/or dangerous behavior.
- ▶ Develop a concerted and coordinated multi-agency intervention strategy for referral, intervention, enforcement, treatment, corrective action and follow-up.
- ▶ Establish policy, procedures and practices to reduce and/or prevent the incidence of severe hoarding.

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

Shared Responsibilities of Cooperative Agencies

- ▶ Participate in and/or coordinate when appropriate multi-departmental "Teaming" meetings (i.e., multi-agency problem-solving discussions and case reviews).
- ▶ Work with relevant County departments and Task Force associated agencies in joint investigations when requested.
- ▶ Participate in cross training programs for participating agencies.
- ▶ Collect monthly statistics on number of hoarding cases taken in and number of collaborations with other agencies on hoarding cases.
- ▶ Collect number of hoarding cases referred to agency not accepted as a case.
- ▶ Provide education to partner agencies' staff on hoarding preventive measures and protocol for referral to partner agency(s).

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

SPECIFIC PROGRAM/AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

Office of the County Attorney

- ▶ Explore legislative remedies to address the chronic code violators who demonstrate hoarding behavior.
- ▶ Work with District Court Judges to identify appropriate means of bringing the hoarder into treatment or ways to assist in correcting the hoarding behavior.

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

SPECIFIC PROGRAM/AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA)

- ▶ Act as the lead department when complaints are received regarding the physical conditions of a structure which affects the health and safety of the occupants as a result of hoarding behavior
- ▶ Notify Crisis Center of any hoarding situations which might require DHHS involvement, particularly when a suspected vulnerable adult or child is involved
- ▶ DHCA will dedicate a representative to participate in Teaming meetings and serve as point of contact in order to share code enforcement information
- ▶ Provide complaint investigation information to other signatory agencies to this agreement when requested

Housing Inspector Rating Bedroom Clutter Situation



Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

SPECIFIC PROGRAM/AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

Department of Fire and Rescue

- ▶ Fire and Rescue will dedicate a representative to participate in Teaming meetings and serve as point of contact in order to share fire code enforcement information.
- ▶ Notify Crisis Center of any hoarding situations involving a vulnerable adult or child.
- ▶ Provide complaint investigation information to other signatory agencies to this agreement when requested.

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

SPECIFIC PROGRAM/AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

Police Department / Animal Services

- ▶ Provide education on recognition of hoarding involving animals and referral protocol Adult Protective Services, (APS), Child Protective Services (CPS), DHCA, Crisis Center and Fire and Rescue personnel.
- ▶ Assist with security at scene of hoarding incident when requested by other signatory agencies.
- ▶ Follow up on any animal welfare issues or concerns of other agencies.
- ▶ Provide complaint investigation information to other signatory agencies to this agreement when requested and permitted by law and departmental policy.

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

SPECIFIC PROGRAM/AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

Department of Health and Human Services

Adult Protective Services (APS)

- ▶ Client/resident can be referred to APS if client is or appears to be vulnerable. A vulnerable adult is unable to manage daily needs either due to cognitive or physical impairment.
- ▶ When referring clients to APS, if the referring person is not sure if it is an APS case, then refer to APS and let APS decide.
- ▶ Dedicate a DHHS staff presence at hoarding court appearances to ensure a DHHS connection is established

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

SPECIFIC PROGRAM/AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

Department of Health and Human Services **Child Protective Services (CPS)**

- ▶ If there is reason to suspect that a child/children has been or is being abused or neglected, family should be referred to CPS.
- ▶ If referral source is unsure if case is appropriate for CPS, case should be referred and let CPS decide.
- ▶ If referral source thinks that child/children are in immediate danger, they should also contact 911 for an immediate response.
- ▶ Dedicate a DHHS staff presence at hoarding court appearances to ensure a DHHS connection is established

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

SPECIFIC PROGRAM/AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

Department of Health and Human Services

Crisis Center

- ▶ Provide on-site response (24/7) to requests from agencies, families, etc. when there are symptoms of a behavioral health crisis (mental health, substance abuse) in addition to hoarding concerns.
- ▶ Provide consultation (24/7) with other agencies, families, etc. with problem solving on how to approach behavioral health and hoarding crises.
- ▶ Provide assessment of identified clients by licensed mental health professionals to provide crisis evaluations, recommending or implementing interventions including
 - outpatient treatment,
 - detox,
 - crisis alternatives to psychiatric hospital evaluation,
 - voluntary hospitalization and
 - issuing emergency evaluation petitions.

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

SPECIFIC PROGRAM/AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

Department of Health and Human Services

Special Needs Housing

- ▶ Eligible residents will be provided emergency financial assistance and case management support to prevent homelessness.
- ▶ Energy Assistance Programs will be available to help with home heating and electrical bills to eligible households.
- ▶ If the house is deemed uninhabitable resulting in homelessness, the resident will be assessed for eligibility for homeless services including
 - case management,
 - emergency shelter services and transitional shelter services designed to help individuals and families obtain permanent housing.

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

SPECIFIC PROGRAM/AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC)

- ▶ HOC follows HUD regulations and utilizes its own inspections process. In extreme cases, county departments are involved and Teaming will be called. When other county departments receive information about a hoarding case at an HOC Unit, that department will alert HOC about it.
- ▶ When an HOC resident is under the care of other agencies, HOC must obtain a reciprocal release of information from the resident, and a multi-agency form may be used.
- ▶ HOC will provide necessary information to APS/CPS during the course of an investigation.
- ▶ HOC employees are mandated to provide information when there is a threat to self or others.
- ▶ Collect data on hoarding cases when possible (Fair Housing laws prohibit HOC from stating anything about hoarding in their records). This regulation makes it difficult to collect and report data.

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

SPECIFIC PROGRAM/AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

The City of Rockville, Takoma Park and Gaithersburg

The City of Rockville, the City of Gaithersburg and the City of Takoma Park, recognizing the importance of a coordinated response when addressing serious hoarding behavior, will assist the Montgomery County Task Force on Hoarding Behavior in its efforts by participating in the following:

- Participate in Team Meetings.
- Identify a point of contact for purposes of sharing code enforcement information on hoarding activities within their respective jurisdiction.
- Notify Crisis Center of hoarding situations involving a vulnerable adult or child.
- Provide information on complaint investigations to Cooperative Agencies upon request.
- Collect statistics on hoarding cases referred to Cooperative Agencies for investigation.

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

SPECIFIC PROGRAM/AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

The City of Rockville, Takoma Park and Gaithersburg

- Participate in cross training programs offered by Cooperative Agencies.
- Notify Cooperative Agencies when chronic code violation cases are forwarded to Court for adjudication and include assigned caseworkers, as appropriate, in the hearing.
- Serve as lead agency when complaints regarding the physical condition of a structure have been filed in their respective jurisdictions, which, due to alleged hoarding behavior, affects the health and safety of the occupants. In Takoma Park, the City will serve as the lead agency in all owner-occupied housing.

Cooperative Agreement Among Participating Agencies

SPECIFIC PROGRAM/AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

Non-government agencies

- Montgomery County Task Force on Hoarding Behavior recognizes the crucial role non-county agencies play in remediation of hoarding situations. Mental health providers, social service agencies, non-profit organizations, who work on housing concerns and churches, all have unique contributions to add.
- As such, Teamings will strive to identify the agencies with a stake in a specific hoarding case and will invite them to join the collaborative effort.
- Information will only be shared with these agencies when the appropriate release of information has been obtained (or de-identified data will be used).

This Cooperative Agreement is effective as of February 1, 2011. At the request of any of the involved parties, modifications to this agreement can be proposed. Each signatory agency will participate in reviewing the proposed modifications(s). Any of the parties to this agreement may withdraw from participation by notifying all of the other parties thirty days prior to its withdrawal date.

1/14/2011
Date

Uma S. Ahluwalia
Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director
Department of Health and Human Services

2/14/2011
Date

Jerry Robinson
Jerry Robinson, Acting Executive Director
Housing Opportunities Commission

2/7/11
Date

Richard Bowers
Richard Bowers, Chief
Department of Fire and Rescue

1/13/11
Date

Marc Hansen
Marc Hansen, County Attorney
Office of the County Attorney

2/10/11
Date

J. Thomas Manger
J. Thomas Manger, Chief
Department of Police

2/1/11
Date

Richard Y. Nelson, Jr.
Richard Y. Nelson, Jr., Director
Department of Housing and Community Affairs

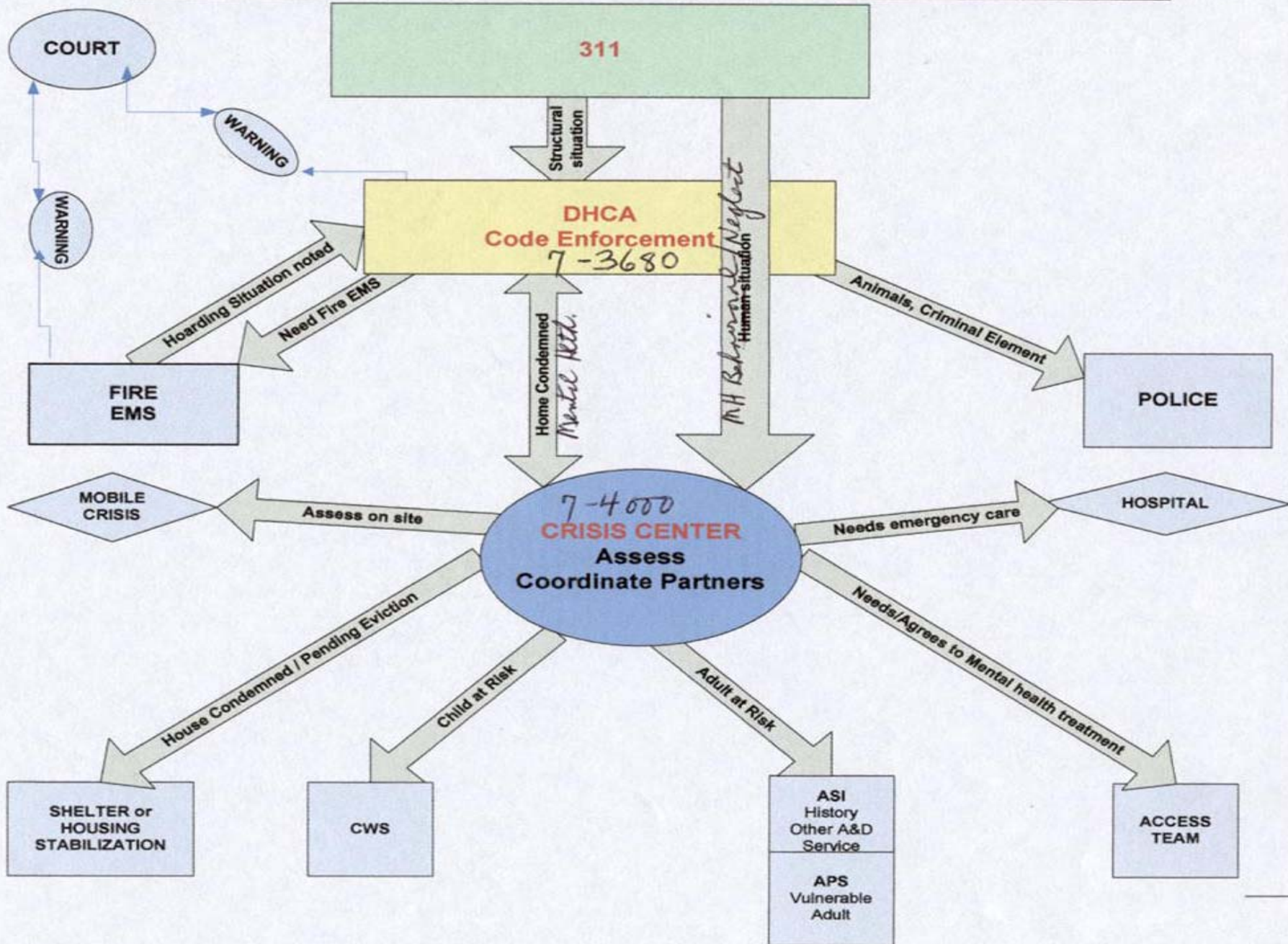
APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

By: Marc Hansen
Marc Hansen, County Attorney

Date: 1/13/11

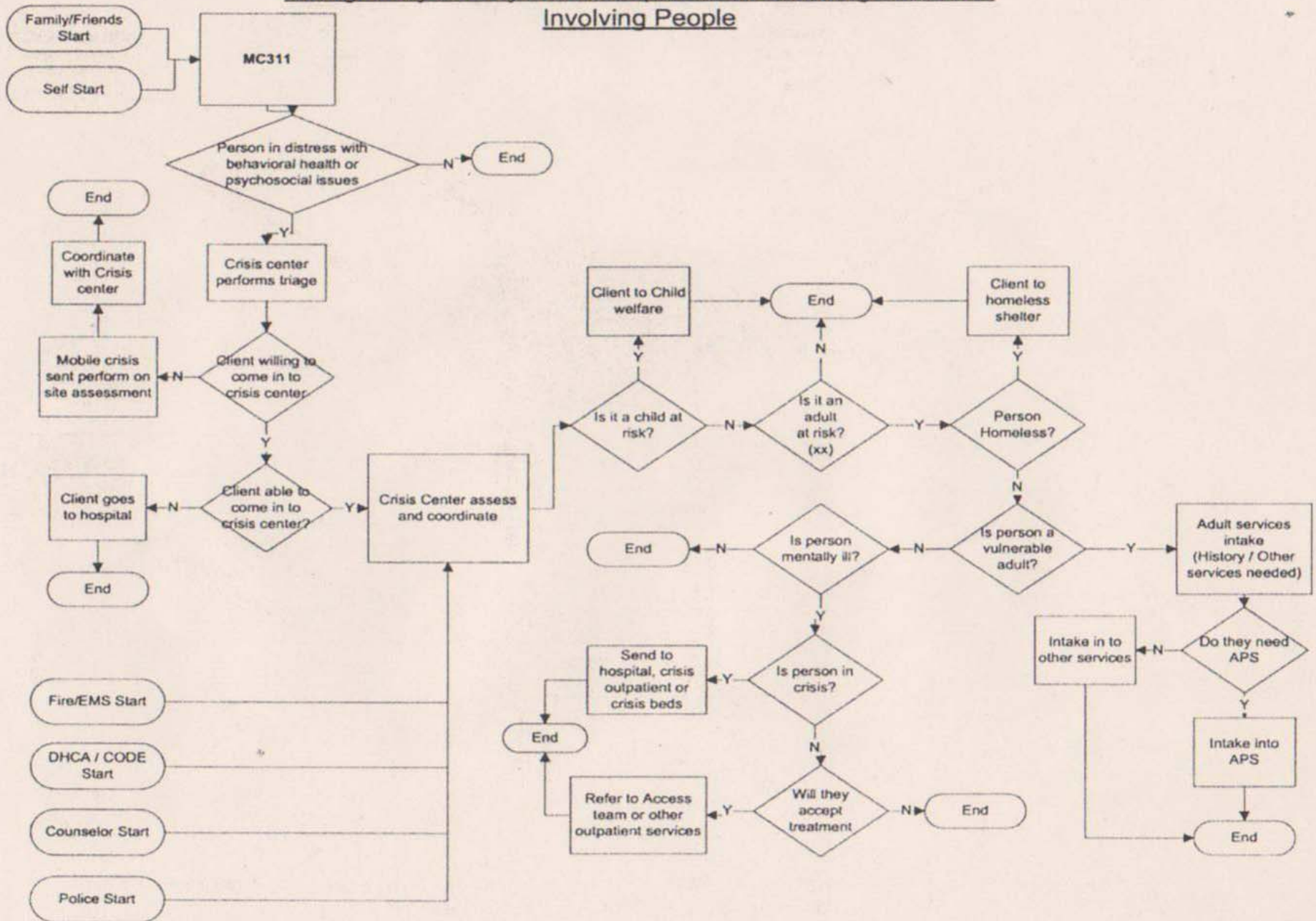
Attachment A: DHHS Client Release of Information Authorization Form
Attachment B: Interagency Hoarding Response Matrix
Attachment C: Information Sharing Protocol

HOARDING RESPONSE FLOWCHART



COORDINATION EXISTS WITH ALL IDENTIFIED PARTNERS

Decision Tree A – Montgomery County Initial Responses to Hoarding Situations Involving People



Decision Tree B –
Montgomery County Initial Responses to Hoarding Situations
Involving Structures

